

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY- -JUNE 9, 2008- -6:00 P.M.

Mayor Johnson convened the Special Meeting at 6:10 p.m. Vice Mayor Tam led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call - Present: Councilmembers deHaan, Gilmore, Matarrese, Tam and Mayor Johnson - 5.

Absent: None.

(08-254) Workshop on the City's Two-year Financial Plan and Capital Improvement Projects for Fiscal Years 2008-10.

The City Manager provided a handout on the issue bin items from the previous workshops.

The Police Chief gave a brief presentation on the Police Department issue bin items.

Mayor Johnson stated a broad look at long-term animal shelter operations is needed.

In response to Vice Mayor Tam's inquiry about the amount of parking citation revenue retained by the Police Department, the Police Chief stated the number would be provided.

The Finance Director stated the total amount collected would also be provided.

Councilmember Matarrese stated that he would like the Council to consider giving general direction: 1) to make cuts as far away from the point of delivery as possible; a Crossing Guard provides direct delivery of service; putting a Fire truck out of service takes away service at the point of delivery; a retiree suggested using other staff; department heads should come back with alternate plans; 2) that restructuring debt not be done to defer payments; adjustments will have to made when the State adopts its budget; and 3) that there is a false sense of the fund balance; the fund balance does not address current debt; some of the fund balance should be used to fund retirement benefits; new accounting standards require that the debt be recognized and that the City start saving.

Councilmember deHaan stated detailed budget information was originally presented; requested a summary sheet be provided to show the proposed changes.

Mayor Johnson stated the City Manager has provided proposed funding

for each department; the Council could set the dollar amounts and ask department heads to come back to Council to explain how the funds will be used; the Council should not go through each line to tell departments how to spend funds and instead, should set the funding amount and let the departments determine how to work within the budget after being given general direction from the Council; Council could give direction on things like refinancing, the Meyer's House, and Art in the Park.

Councilmember deHaan stated Councilmember Matarrese raised the issue of retirement benefits; the matter should be placed on the issue bin.

Mayor Johnson concurred; stated Council should give direction on how much would be paid and the source of the money.

The City Manager noted the matter was included on the issue bin responses provided tonight under the Finance Department.

The Council discussed the Mayor's proposal and Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB).

Mayor Johnson stated the Council needs to establish a policy that requires payments for retirement benefits be on-going every year despite the City's budget situation; the City has made a commitment; the longer it is not paid for the more expensive it is in the end; a deposit should be made to get the Trust Fund started.

Councilmember deHaan raised concerns about Alameda Point and the Golf Course.

Mayor Johnson stated Council should adopt a policy that General Fund Revenues cannot be used for the golf course.

The Council discussed Alameda Point.

Mayor Johnson stated the number of Police calls at Alameda Point should be tracked.

Vice Mayor Tam stated that she agrees with the Council's prior discussions that a letter should be sent to the Navy being clear and adamant that the Navy should pay to maintain its land.

Councilmember deHaan stated the City should look at how much it is really costing the City.

The City Manager stated the letter would go out this week.

Mayor Johnson stated the letter should include the amount of property tax that the City would be collecting if the Base had been conveyed and a reasonable amount of development had occurred; failure to convey the Base has impacted the City's ability to collect taxes.

The Assistant City Manager stated a statewide study indicated that the loss to State and local governments is \$1/2 billion.

Mayor Johnson requested the specific loss amount for Alameda be included in the letter.

Councilmember Matarrese stated the Council should go forward with approving the numbers at the next meeting; the last cuts should be at the point of service delivery and public safety; the Council can see what creative ideas come back.

Following discussion of the Meyer's House, Mayor Johnson stated the City should get a commitment from the Trust about how much money the City will receive and should only spend said amount.

The Recreation and Parks Director stated staff would make an inquiry.

Vice Mayor Tam questioned whether the need for funds for capital improvements could also be communicated to the Trust.

The Development Services Director gave a brief presentation on redevelopment.

The City Manager gave an overview of Recreation and Parks Department issue bin items.

Mayor Johnson stated there should be a gradual reduction in funding for the museum on a step down basis.

After further discussion about the Recreation and Parks Department budget, Mayor Johnson requested funding to light the two tennis courts that are proposed to be turned off; stated it is difficult to turn lights back on at lighted facilities once they have been turned off.

Councilmember Matarrese inquired whether money from the public art fund could be used for Art in the Park; stated the art community could raise funds and the City could cover the expense of portable restrooms.

The City Manager stated staff would review the matter.

Mayor Johnson stated the City should provide help this year with the art community forming a committee to become self-sustaining; staff should work with the group; the group should expect to fund the activity in the future.

Following discussion of the Golf Course, Mayor Johnson stated that a policy should come to Council indicating that the Golf Course will not be subsidized by the General Fund; a crisis plan needs to be created that includes slowing expenditures to make the fund balance last longer.

After further discussion, Mayor Johnson stated staff should get the golf clubs and players involved with finding a solution.

The City Manager reviewed the Public Works, Planning and Building, and Finance Departments issue bin items.

In response to Councilmember Gilmore's request to have the May 19 retiree health benefit information posted to the website, the City Clerk stated the issue bin document would be added to the web posting for the meeting.

Councilmember deHaan raised concerns about City departments paying rent at City Hall west.

Councilmember Matarrese inquired whether a portion of Measure B money could go to pay for Public Work's overhead, which could then go into the General Fund.

Following discussion of the Library hours, Councilmember Gilmore stated that she would vote to find \$236,000 to fund the library.

Mayor Johnson and Councilmember Matarrese concurred with Councilmember Gilmore.

Following discussion of vacant positions, the Human Resources Director stated staff could provide information on how long positions have been vacant.

Bill Smith, Alameda, discussed technology.

Dora Mairena suggested Council review alternative bumping practices.

Father Vince Cotter, Fire Department Chaplin, stated that the Firefighters' main concern is for the safety of the community.

Jeff DelBono, Alameda Firefighters, stated the Firefighters do not suggest cutting a truck; the mandatory overtime has been due to the Fire Department being understaffed.

Domenick Weaver, Alameda Firefighters Local 689 President, questioned whether accurate information has been provided regarding positions and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) collection rates; urged Council to bring the staffing up to the allocated level.

Mayor Johnson requested staff to compare the City EMS collection rate to private collection rates.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Johnson adjourned the Special Meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lara Weisiger
City Clerk

The agenda for this meeting was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.